

truth, of which I have just spoken. Nothing could be fairer than that criticism. For instance, he remarked of my description, of the Passage du Pont Neuf [the chief scene of the novel]: 'It is not accurate, it is a fantastic description, like Balzac's of the Rue Soli. The passage is bald, commonplace, ugly, and, in particular, narrow, but it has not the dense blackness, the shades a la Rembrandt "which you impute to it. This also is a way of being unfaithful [to the truth].' He was right; only it must be admitted that places merely have such mournfulness or gaiety of aspect as we may attribute to them. One passes with a shudder before the house where a murder has just been committed, and which seemed quite commonplace only the previous day. None the less, Ste.-Beuve's criticism holds good. It is certain that things are carried to the point of nightmare in 'The'rese Eaquin/ and that the strict truth falls short of so many horrors. In making this admission I wish to show that I perfectly understand and even accept Ste.-Beuve's standpoint of average truth. He is also right when he expresses his astonishment that The'rese and Laurent [the wife and lover] do not content their passion immediately after the murder of Camille [the husband] ; the case is open to argument, but in the ordinary course of things they would live in each other's arms before being maddened by remorse. It will be seen then that, in spite of my own books, I share this respect for logic and truth, and do not try to defend myself against criticism which seems quite just. Yes, certainly, it is a bad thing to forsake the substantial ground of reality to plunge into exaggerations of draughtsmanship and colouring."

About the time of the publication of
"The'rese Kaquin"
Zola at last obtained the coveted honours of
the footlights.
In conjunction with his friend Marius Eoux
he wrote a
drama based on his "Mysteres de Marseille/"
and the di-
rector of the Marseillaise G-ymnase consented
to stage it.
It is possible that this arrangement was
effected during a
visit which the director made to Paris, for,
according to
some accounts, a trial performance of the
play took place